



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES CALIFORNIA TASK FORCE FOR INVESTIGATING CHILD SEXUAL PREDATOR AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHER

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice today honored Detective Christie Hirota and five other members of the Sacramento Valley, California, High Tech Crimes Task Force for their investigation that resulted in the timely arrest of a sexual predator who victimized at least five children and who had a foster child in his care at the time of his arrest.

Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General Ed O’Callaghan, Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt Dummermuth, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administrator Caren Harp presented Hirota and other task force members with the Missing Children’s Child Protection Award during the Justice Department’s National Missing Children’s Day ceremony. The award recognizes the extraordinary efforts of law enforcement officers who make a significant investigative or program contribution to protect children from abuse or victimization.

Other task force members recognized included:

- Detective James Williams, Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department
- Detective Melinda Gobron, Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department
- Special Agent Scott Schofield, FBI, Sacramento Field Office
- Investigator George Vasiliou, California Highway Patrol
- Detective Avis Beery, Sacramento Police Department

“The vigilance of this task force proves that there is a critical need for dedicated and timely investigative work in the fight to stop child exploitation,” said Administrator Caren Harp. “The Justice Department commends the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force for bringing this sex offender to justice and their commitment to stopping further child victimization.”

Hirota led a task force investigation into the suspect immediately after patrol officers received a Secure Digital (SD) memory card containing imagery of a partially-clothed boy from an acquaintance of the suspect. Through police and social service reports, Detective Hirota discovered that the suspect had a history of troubling behavior with boys, and that he currently had a foster child in his home. Just after midnight, Detective Hirota received a search warrant, which led to the seizure and subsequent review of multiple digital storage devices containing

pornographic images of the suspect's foster children. Within 48 hours of the initial patrol officers' report, the task force's investigation led to the suspect's arrest on the charge of molesting four children.

The Department also recognized 11 other law enforcement officers for their investigations of child predators who sexually assaulted children, or created or viewed child pornography, as well as two firefighters who found a lost six-year-old boy. Harp also recognized Madison Dozier, a fifth grader at Reiley Elementary School in Alexandria, Kentucky, as the 20th winner of the National Missing Children's Day poster contest.

Additional information about [National Missing Children's Day](#) is available online.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership, grants and resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal justice system. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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